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issue 1, volume 83 | www.newbuffalotimes.com | Thursday, January 4, 2024

Joseph and Rosemary Low Family Foundation
Date December 27, 2023
PAY TO THE ORDER OF Fernwood Botanical Garden $ 50,000
Fifty Thousand DOLLARS
FOR
John & Barbara Low

Low Family Foundation donates $50,000 to Fernwood Botanical Garden **PAGE 3**

First African American takes oath as mayor in Michigan City **PAGE 4**

Ruling on cause of house explosion, fire **PAGE 5**

Community Center to offer Winter Book and Movie Festival **PAGE 9**

La Lumiere to play at La Porte Invitational in Civic Auditorium **PAGE 10**

Man declared deceased near injury crash in Chikaming **PAGE 10**

GO TAKE A HIKE...

HIKERS START THE YEAR OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT WITH 'FIRST DAY HIKE'

— PAGE 6 —

PHOTO OF HIKERS TREKKING THROUGH ROBINSON WOODS PRESERVE DURING THE FIRST DAY HIKE BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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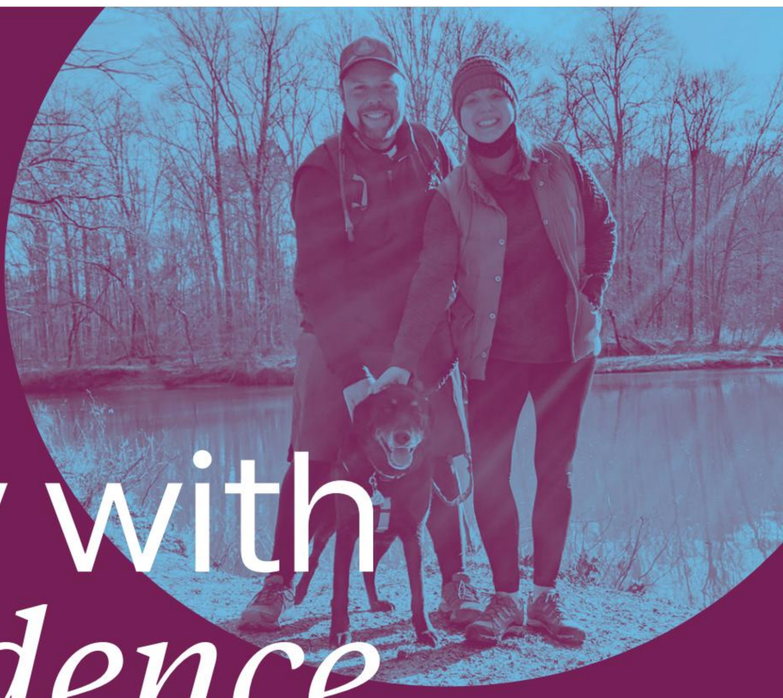

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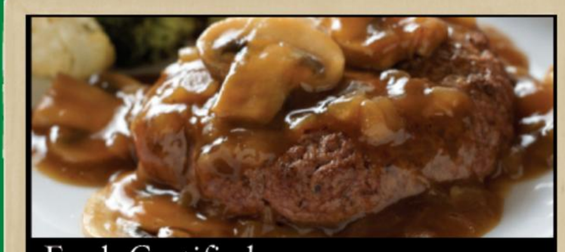

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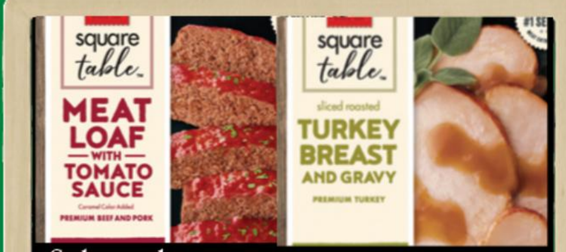

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Fernwood Executive Director Carol Line, Barbara Low and Foundation Advisory Board Chairperson John N. Low

Low Family Foundation donates $50,000 to Fernwood Botanical Garden

The Low Family Foundation, created by Joseph N. and Rosemary E. Low in 2023, recently donated $50,000 to Fernwood Botanical Garden in Niles, Michigan.

Foundation Advisory Board Chairperson John N. Low presented a check to Fernwood Executive Director Carol Line.

Fernwood was selected because of its commitment to excellence and significance to the community as a placemaker – a cultural resource and education center. Fernwood will celebrate its 60th anniversary as a public garden in 2024, with the mission to enrich people's lives by awakening and deepening their appreciation of nature.

This generous grant will support Fernwood's 60th anniversary lecture series, the garden's internship program for high school and college students and summer camp scholarships for area children. It will also provide sponsorship support throughout the year for a number of special anniversary celebrations, including a June 2 garden party fundraiser. The grant will also help expand the garden's annual LIGHTS at Fernwood event, which spans several weeks during the holiday season.

The Low Family Foundation has a mission to support not-for-profit charitable, educational, and religious organizations within a 100-mile radius of Niles, Michigan. Joseph and Rosemary Low were long-time residents of Niles, and the donation was made in memory of Wilma V. Low.

Established in 1964, Fernwood is a unique property in southwest Michigan with 105 acres of cultivated gardens and natural areas with woodlands, ravines, wetlands and river frontage on the St. Joseph River. The property is minutes from Lake Michigan, a short distance north of the University of Notre Dame, and 90 minutes from Chicago. The garden is open year-round, Tuesday through Sunday, in Buchanan Township at 13988 Range Line Road, Niles, Michigan.

For more information, visit www.fernwoodbotanical.org. — STAFF REPORTS

There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination. — *Mencius*

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

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JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJESKI, JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, JUDY H. ZABICKI, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
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Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
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NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
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CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
MARY ROBERTSON, CLERK
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES

MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

First African American takes oath as mayor in Michigan City

BY STAN MADDUX

Angie Nelson Deuitch paused with emotion Saturday, Dec. 30, while being the first African American ever sworn in as mayor in Michigan City.

She officially took the seat Jan. 1.

"One-hundred and eighty-seven years and here we have arrived," said former longtime state representative Scott Pelath, the emcee of the ceremony and former classmate of the incoming mayor.

"Better sooner than later," shouted a member of the enthusiastic crowd.

Supporters of Deuitch recognized the occasion as historic but also strongly pointed out what they believe are the skills the soon to be new mayor brings to the position.

"I just hope that it's not what everybody concentrates on that she is an African American. She is qualified and ready to go," said Bryant Dabney, who took the oath of office for his second term on the city council.

Eight other incumbent and newly elected members of the city council were also sworn in before more than 500 people at Blue Chip Casino.

It was more of a gala event that included the presentation of colors by the Michigan City High School Reserve Officers Training Corps along with the singing of the "Star Spangled Banner" and "America the Beautiful" with help from the Krueger Middle School Choir.

Also featured were expressions of wisdom and encouragement from the city's first ever female mayor, Sheila Brillson Matias, elected to two terms beginning in 1995.

She said Deuitch has traits such as guts, persistence, insistence and vision that the city's forefathers had during the early industrial hey days of the community established in 1836.

Matias also said Deuitch is the right mayor to guide the city into another more prosperous era that seems fast approaching because of the investments already being made from the nearly completed South Shore Railroad commuter line's double track.

"We are on the cusp of change in Michigan City and I can't think of anyone better, smarter and with more leadership skills than you Mayor Angie to guide this ship," she said.

She advised Nelson Deuitch to lead the city with her heart and "be real."

Matias also suggested she get to know all of her city employees on a more personal level and treat them with respect.

"Nothing is more important than that," she said.

Deuitch, 52, is a former longtime employee of NIPSCO, who's wrapping up the last of her two separate terms on the city council.

Currently, she owns Diversity Square, a business focusing on connecting high school students not going to college with employers, workforce development and obtaining grants for things like food assistance in the community.

Deuitch addressed the crowd by first giving thanks to God and all of the people beginning as a child who helped her achieve success.

"Everybody always told me the sky was the limit for me. I didn't get it all of the time. Sometimes, I veered away from it and ran from it, but it's led me to this moment," she said.

However, Deuitch emphasized the occasion was not strictly about her.

She said everyone, from city council members to department heads, were asked to take the oath of office separately but together to show everyone a team approach is key to moving the city forward.

"This is truly about the future of Michigan City," she said.

Marty Corley, who will become the city's new police chief, said one of his top priorities is continuing the effort that began last year to reduce the number of shootings.

Corley, a veteran of the Michigan City Police Department, also said he felt having an African American mayor will make a difference in bringing the community together.

About 30 percent of the city's population is black.

"It gives people hope. We have a lot to give but now I think everybody is ready to pitch in and do their part," he said.

The universe is all causation.
— Dino N. Fatouros

VICKERS THEATRE TO HOST CHARITY SCREENING OF 'THE FUNERAL PHOTOGRAPHER'

A charity screening of the award-winning short film, "The Funeral Ph otographer," will take place at 3 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 14, at the Vickers Theatre in Three Oaks.

The chosen charity is Final Farewell. This nonprofit provides services for families whose children pass away and they cannot afford funeral or burial services for these loved ones.

The event will feature a screening of the film, a question-and-answer session with filmmakers and behind-the-scenes clips.

For more information on the charity and to make a donation, visit finalfarewell.org.

The Vickers Theatre is located at 6 North Elm St. in Three Oaks.

— STAFF REPORTS

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Ruling on cause of house explosion, fire

BY STAN MADDUX

Investigators have ruled a man cutting open a metal propane tank was the cause of his residence being destroyed by an explosion and fire in La Porte.

There were no injuries because none of the people living there were inside at the time of the blast.

On Dec. 22, firefighters were called to an older single-story house in the 200 block of Darlington St. on the city's northeast side.

La Porte Fire Chief Andy Snyder said a man was a short distance from his residence when he cut open the top of the tank, which still contained about five gallons of liquid propane.

The investigation revealed the liquid propane from possibly spilling on the ground or the vapors from the gas found their way into the basement possibly throughout gaps or windows in the foundation and came into contact with the pilot light on a hot water heater.

He said the over 20 gallon tank was on its side in the back yard close to the residence when discovered by firefighters.

"Once the water heater kicked on would have been enough to ignite the fumes and cause the explosion that took place," he said.

Snyder said the man did not explain why he was cutting open the tank, which is not a very safe practice because sparks from a cutting tool coming into contact with any propane still in such a container can cause an explosion.

Snyder said the explosion had enough force to blow out most of the windows and send flames to multiple areas of the home.

The fire had spread too much throughout the structure for firefighters to go inside with hoses to try and save it.

"It's standing but there's substantial damage throughout the house," he said.

Snyder said the basement was left with about six feet of standing water from a broken water line inside the home and the amount of water it took to put out the blaze.

"We had to fight the fire mostly from the outside of the structure," he said.

Two cats inside the residence did not survive.

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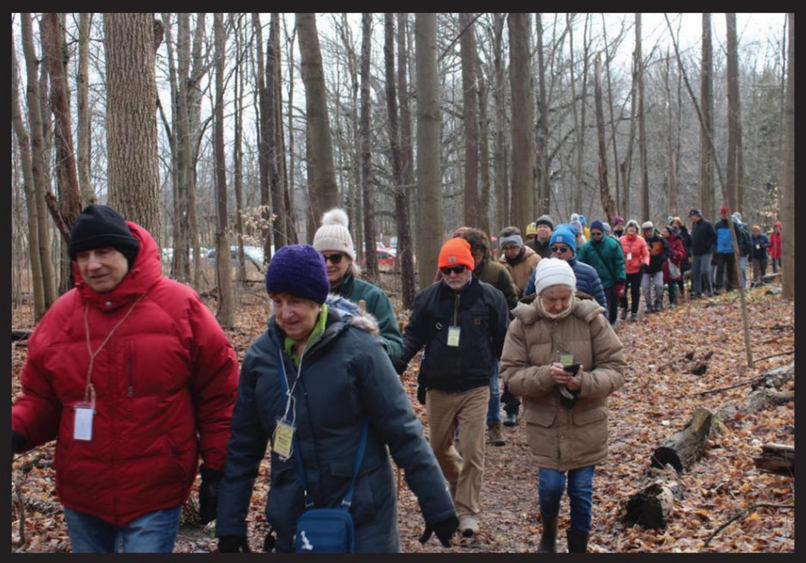
Hikers trek through Robinson Woods Preserve during the First Day Hike

Hikers President Pat Fisher introduces the group to First Day Hikes

Hikers trek through the Robinson Woods Preserve for a First Day Hike



Hikers start the year off on the right foot with 'First Day Hike'

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

In 1992, a large group of people embarked with Patrick Flynn in Massachusetts on what would become the first-ever "First Day Hike."

"He just wanted to get people out in the winter - so he offered soup and 300 some people showed up," said Pat Fisher, president of Harbor Country Hikers, to the large group of hikers - and some dogs - who had gathered at Flynn Woods and Robinson Woods preserves on East Road in Three Oaks Monday, Jan. 1.

The hikes were done for several years in Massachusetts until it was suggested that other states join in, which occurred in 2012.

In 2016, the National Park Service joined in.

"Since then the Canadians have joined in - so it's kind of an international thing, they have a lot of people out hiking today," Fisher said.

Indeed, heading down East Road, one could see people, hiking sticks in hand, entering the forest that lined the road.

"This is a good way to start the new year" was what one hiker said before entering Robinson Woods.

According to the American Hiking Society, First Day Hikes are part of a nationwide initiative led by America's State Parks to encourage everyone to get outdoors.

Hundreds of free, guided hikes are organized in all 50 states on New Year's Day. Last year nearly 55,000 people rang in the New Year, collectively hiking over 133,000 miles throughout the country.

Closer to home, Fisher said the Hikers have been participating for the last three to four years. One year, Fisher and two other diehard hikers did it on ice.

"We didn't fall - but it was on ice," he said.

There was no danger of anyone slipping and sliding this year: The near-40 degree day had warmed up so that, despite the consistent shower of flurries that spilled over from the low-lying clouds and onto the earth the previous day, by afternoon, any sign of the fluffy white stuff had vanished.

After traversing Robinson Woods, the group crossed over to Flynn, which is across the road.

Both preserves have been acquired by Chikaming Open Lands (COL).

According to COL's website, William and Jean Robinson bought the land now known as Robinson Woods in the 1960s and donated the southern 65 acres to The Nature Conservancy in 1968. In 1973, the remaining northern 15 acres was donated. In 2009, The Nature Conservancy transferred the property to COL.

Per the website, the property includes seasonal streams and a county drain, which eventually drain into Cherry Creek, which has a ravine that sits at the northern edge of the property. The preserve is replete with several wetland areas, which support a variety of plants and wildlife.

The Flynn Woods Preserve property was purchased by COL in 2014, with funding from the Susan Flynn family and a combination of private contributions grant funding from The Pokagon Fund.

The John Motley Drain, which divides the property, connects to Cherry Creek, a direct tributary to Lake Michigan.

The property includes a mix of oak-hickory and wetland forests which, together with Robinson Woods, creates a 115-acre protected area. A 2015 inventory unearthed 344 special, several of which are considered rare and protected at the state level.

The Hiker's next trek will be a hike through the New Buffalo Area Schools' Nature Study Trails, located in back of New Buffalo Elementary School on Lubke Road, and COL's adjoining Turtle Creek Preserve Saturday, Jan. 20.

Fisher said the focus will be on flatwoods and the wetland, which is becoming more extinct in Michigan due to not being protected well under wetland rules.

"Eventually, hopefully, that will change because they are very much dependent on amphibians and a lot of different insects and crustaceans that live in these little mud puddle that lay in whirlpools," he said.

HOROSCOPE

JANUARY 4-10, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

Take some time to reflect on your life path and think about how you can adjust your career, long-term goals or commitments to be more in line with your philosophical outlook on life. When you do what you love, the money follows, and the right people show up to help you as needed.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

Educational opportunities that pop up now and opportunities to make contacts with people who are further along in your field will help you secure a better position in the future. So, don't shy away from talking to superiors now or let inner issues keep you from asking questions.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

You may have to take some responsibility for some previous actions or remarks. This is the time to set the record straight or tell someone how something didn't go well and where the changes need to be made. It is not a bad thing. It's the opportunity to get back on track with others.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

When it comes to relationships, you would be wise to let things develop slowly and naturally. Let your ideas and expectations move beyond present circumstances and be more outward or forward with others. Start taking more responsibility and create the life you want.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

This is a great time to make a commitment to your health and beauty routines. Any adjustments you make on the home-front to accommodate a healthier lifestyle will be easily carried throughout the year ahead. Career changes and work relationships will blossom now too.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Connect with others through a common creative goal rather than trying to sit down and converse one on one, this week. You will get a lot more information about someone's situation if you don't come at them directly. If you want to nurture and help someone, do it on the down low.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

There is a much-needed lucky vibe coming in for you this week and it will help you make good changes on the home-front. If you need to relax more, maybe it's time to put in a better bathtub. If you need to get more work done, maybe it's time to update that home office.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Your creative juices are flowing, and you will be rich with ideas this week. You may just have the makings of a great novel or work of art caught up in that mind of yours. It's time to start talking and brainstorming with people more. Get your ideas down on paper to solidify them.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

You have a wonderful vibe coming at you from the stars now. Use it to create more wealth in your life. Your insights and hunches are good. So, only take risks after you have taken the time to feel things out both mentally, and emotionally as well. Really go deep here.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

This week you may start to see yourself differently or react to stimuli in a different way. You are undergoing changes on an inner level and may need to give yourself some time before you can make decisions or commit to others now. Let yourself get refresh before joining the troops.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18

This is the time to let things go and put an end to situations that are costing you too much money or using up too much of your energy. The opportunity to express yourself openly and honestly is coming in this week. Put your cards on the table and don't be afraid to walk.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

Your social scene is looking very lively this week. You will feel more at ease with people and will enjoy talking and sharing your perspective. Taking the lead may be necessary in some situations, as there may be some head butting or bullying types. You'll need to be assertive.

There is no great genius without some touch of madness. — *Aristotle*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

			9		8			4
9		8				1		
6	4	2	1		7		8	
		4					1	
			7		2			6
4	7	6	3		1		9	8
		1					3	
	3	9			4	7		

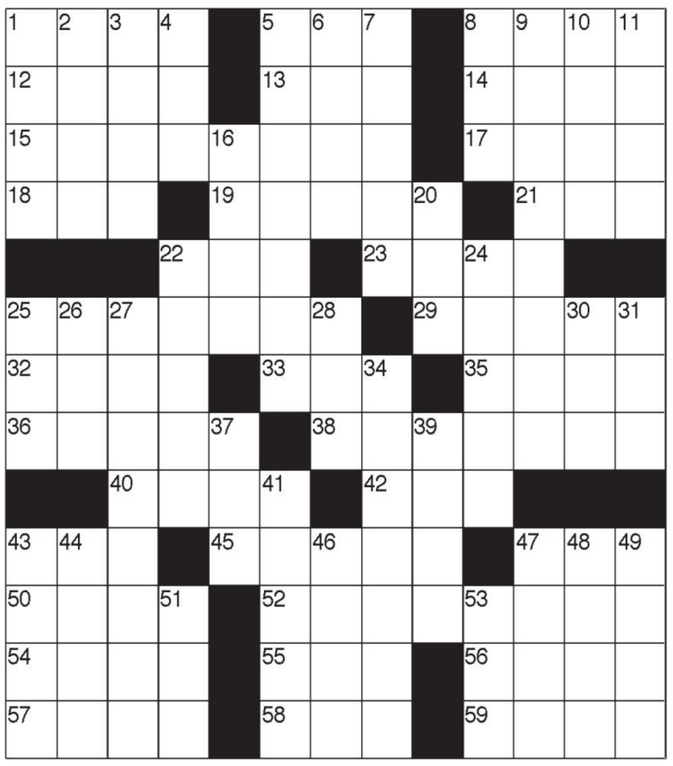
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Border
5 System (abbr.)
8 Nail with a hole
12 Geological vein angle
13 Buddhist column
14 Kemo ____
15 Renegade
17 Isle of Napoleon
18 To or from a distance (pref.)
19 Fishing leader
21 Disfigure
22 Isle
23 Assuage
25 Travel
29 Eight
32 Fraction of a rupee
33 Benedictine title
35 Hindu soul
36 Monsieurs (abbr.)
38 Giant
40 Peacock blue
42 Child's seat
43 Palestine Liberation Organ. (abbr.)
45 Ruby spinel
47 Greek letter
50 Joining bar
52 Horned viper
54 Noble (Ger.)
55 Portuguese coin
56 Cure
57 Conrad's "Victory" heroine
58 Age
59 Mother of Brunhilde

DOWN

1 Minstrel of India
2 Sexual assault
3 Heathen god
4 Fr. pronoun
5 Oblique
6 Eucalyptus tree
7 Milestone
8 Compass direction
9 Sabal
10 Eastern bishop's title
11 Endearment
16 Chin. dynasty
20 Indo-Chin. language
22 Military macaw
24 Rogue
25 Stoppage
26 Switch positions
27 Tacit
28 ___ Kippur
30 Danish county
31 Burmese knife
34 Chills and fever
37 Weep
39 Cornmeal
41 Mother-of-pearl
43 Pelvis (pref.)
44 Mineral deposit
46 Ogle
47 Wing (pref.)
48 Nob
49 Key
51 Guido's note (2 words)
53 Haggard novel



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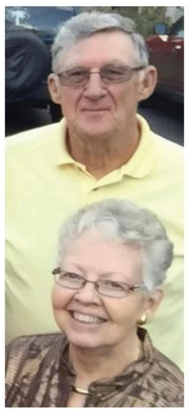
OBITUARIES

Dale Lee Emerick Sr.
1939-2024



Dale Lee Emerick Sr., 84, and his wife, Glenda Raye Emerick, 77, of Three Oaks, both died peacefully, Monday, January 1, 2024.

Dale's life began November 23, 1939, in Three Oaks, Michigan. He was one of six children born to Vernon and Mary "Ruth" Emerick. Glenda's life began October 29, 1946, in Marked Tree, Arkansas. She was one of seven children born to Floyd and Helen Robinson. Dale and Glenda were married September 11, 1965, in Bradford, Arkansas.

Dale and Glenda cherished their faith, children, and grandchildren more than anything.

Dale retired from the Berrien County Road Department in the early 2000s, after several years of service. He assisted the sexton of Forest Lawn Cemetery for a time. He enjoyed maintaining his yard and garden. He loved to mow. He and Glenda both enjoyed people tremendously. They enjoyed lending a helping hand in various situations. They loved their neighbors and were blessed to help each other out over the years. When Dale and Glenda's health started to decline the neighbors would help in any way they could, from bringing meals to running errands. Glenda was an amazing homemaker. She was a wonderful cook. She took ceramics classes for many years and made some of the most wonderful momentos that will be cherished by her family. She enjoyed her flowers and garden, as long as Dale would leave them alone to let them flourish.

Dale and Glenda will be greatly missed by family and friends. They are survived by their daughter, Donna (Charles) Palen of Three Oaks; their son, Dale Lee "Butch" Emerick Jr. of Three Oaks; two grandchildren, Rachel (Patrick) Rohloff of Lisbon, North Dakota, Gregory Palen of Dallas, Texas; Glenda's twin sister, Linda Malott of Arkansas; four brothers, Larry (Beth) Robinson, Don (Benda) Robinson, Daniel "Llano" Robinson, Dwight "Ike" (Debbie) Robinson, all of Arkansas; and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Dale and Glenda were preceded in death by their parents; Glenda's sister, Shirley Bates; Dale's sisters, Arlene Emerick, Marjorie Dickey; Dale's brothers, Don Emerick, Bill Emerick, and Richard Emerick.

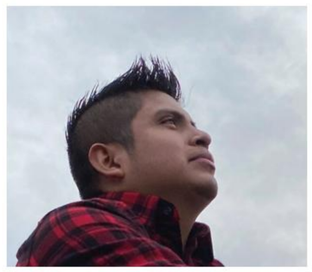
The family will observe a private remembrance.

Dale and Glenda will be laid to rest together in Forest Lawn Cemetery.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Dale and Glenda be made to the Randall Couchman American Legion Post #204, 204 West Linden Street, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks. Please share a memory or a message online at www.wagnercares.com.

David Toga-Pucheta
1994-2023



David Toga-Pucheta, 29, of New Buffalo, passed away unexpectedly, Sunday, December 24, 2023 at his home.

A Celebration of Life Service was held 8:00 P.M. Tuesday, January 2, 2024 at Sommerfeld Chapel, 15 N. Barton St., New Buffalo, MI with Mr. Erik Mendez from the congregation of Jehovah Witnesses officiating. Friends may visit with the family Tuesday from 5:00 P.M. until service time, also at the funeral home. Burial will take place at a later date in Veracruz, Mexico. Memorial donations may be made to www.everloved.com/life-of/david-toga-pucheta/obituary. Those wishing to sign David's Memory Book online may do so at www.sommerfeldchapel.com

David was born March 21, 1994 in San Andres Tuxtla, Veracruz, Mexico to Ramon Toga-Silverio & Pilar Pucheta-Ixtepan. David came to the United States in 2010 and in most recent years, has been the Manager at Rios Mexican Grill in New Buffalo & Michigan City. David loved his job and his co-workers at Rios. He enjoyed expanding his knowledge and learning new things. David was known as a hardworking, humble, responsible & respectful man who was happiest when he was around his family and helping others. He was a loyal son, father, brother & companion & will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

David is survived by his daughter Anna Sofi Toga-Mezo; his parents Ramon & Pilar of Veracruz; his brothers-Jeremias (Eustolia Temich-Ceba) Toga-Pucheta & Ramon Toga-Pucheta both of New Buffalo; his companion Stephanie Salgado of New Buffalo; his aunt Maria De Los Angeles Pucheta-Ixtepan; and all his friends & co-workers at Rios.

COMMUNITY CENTER TO OFFER WINTER BOOK AND MOVIE FESTIVAL

Spice up your winter Wednesdays with a Winter Book and Movie Fest at the New Troy Community Center.

The Festival will showcase four great books that have been made into four great movies. Copies of the books can be checked out now from the Center's lending library, and movies will be screened on the third Wednesdays of each month.

Read the book first, then watch the movie. Or watch the movie first, then read the book. Mix it up, and make it fun.

Movies will be screened at 6 p.m. on these dates: Jan. 17, "Coal Miners Daughter;" Feb. 21, "To Kill a Mockingbird;" March 20, "Killers of the Flower Moon" and April 16, "The Color Purple."

Attendance is free, but donations to maintain the Center and fund future programs are always welcome. Free popcorn will be served. Hot chocolate, tea and coffee will be available for purchase, though visitors are welcome to bring their own beverage.

For more information, please leave voicemail at 269-426-3909, or email FriendsOfNewTroy@yahoo.com.

The New Troy Community Center is located at 13372 California Road in New Troy. Learn more about the Friends of New Troy at www.www.friendsofnewtroy.org. — STAFF REPORTS

DEATH NOTICES

THREE OAKS – James Foster, Jr, 69, of Three Oaks, died Friday, December 29, 2023. Arrangements are pending at Wagner Family Funerals Pobocik Chapel, Three Oaks.

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SPORTS

La Lumiere to play at La Porte Invitational in Civic Auditorium

BY STAN MADDUX

La Lumiere and some of the other top college prep basketball teams in the nation will be playing under the same roof that college basketball legend John Wooden graced in La Porte.

It's no wonder some people are calling La Porte the basketball capital of Indiana for the week beginning Jan. 1.

La Lumiere is scheduled to play late Thursday afternoon, Jan. 4, in the first game of the third annual La Porte Invitational at the Civic Auditorium.

There will also be games from afternoon and into the night on Friday and Saturday at the near century old recently modernized facility.

The Thursday and Friday games will be televised by ESPN while the games on Saturday will be shown on YouTube TV.

The week of nostalgic basketball started Tuesday when the hometown La Porte Slicers at the Civic Auditorium defeated Lowell in boys' high school basketball 64 to 51.

Wooden was head coach at South Bend Central High School when his basketball team played La Porte High School in the Civic Auditorium on three separate occasions during the late 30's and early 40's.

His teams lost twice.

Wooden later became known as the "Wizard of Westwood" at UCLA where he was the head coach of 10 teams winning 10 NCAA basketball titles in the '60s and '70s.

The Civic Auditorium was the home court for the La Porte High School boys' basketball team for several decades until a new gymnasium was built at the high school in the 1970s.

"There's a lot of history in the Civic," said longtime La Porte resident Chip Jones.

Jones, a basketball and baseball standout at La Porte High School in the early '70s, said he spotted Wooden from a distance on a few occasions while growing up next door to the late Bill Wooden, an almost look alike brother of the now deceased coaching icon.

He said they also sounded very much alike when they spoke.

"It was just like hearing John Wooden on TV," he said.

Jones said he never met John Wooden but one of his best childhood friends was his nephew also named John.

The Woodens grew up in downstate Martinsville.

A young Bill Wooden came to La Porte to accept a teaching position at Kesling Middle School and stayed here until his death in 2001 at the age of 79.

His legendary brother was just a few months shy of turning 100 when he passed away in 2010.

Jones said he saw John Wooden walking to and from his brother's residence several times when he was there visiting during his head coaching hey days at UCLA.

He never met John Wooden but once saw his brother sink a long jump shot on the same rim he was shooting baskets on in his driveway on Indiana Ave.

Jones said Bill Wooden walking along the street picked up the ball rolling in his direction and made what was at least a 30 foot shot.

"He drills a two hand set shot, has a little smirk and just walks off. My buddy and I our jaws just dropped," he said.

For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories. — *Plato*

MAN DECLARED DECEASED NEAR INJURY CRASH IN CHIKAMING

An unresponsive person was pronounced deceased at the scene of a crashed vehicle in Chikaming Township despite life-saving efforts.

According to a press release on Chikaming Township Police Department's Facebook that was issued by Chikaming Township Police Chief Todd Taylor, at 9:56 a.m. Monday, Jan. 1, Officer Jeremiah Mansfield was dispatched to Interstate 94, eastbound, near the nine-mile-marker for an unknown injury crash.

After arriving at the scene, Officer Mansfield found an unresponsive person, who was identified as 24-year-old Mohammad Hisham Alkreenawi of Burbank, Illinois, near the crashed vehicle.

"Life-saving efforts were initiated; however, Mr. Alkreenawi was pronounced deceased at the scene," the release stated.

This crash is currently under investigation.

Units assisting Officer Mansfield were the Chikaming Township Fire Department, the Berrien County Sheriff's Office and the Pokagon Tribal Police Department. — STAFF REPORTS

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